(b) As per information available in this Department, there are 24 Contracting Parties to the 1998 agreement as on date.

(c) The advantages that can accrue to the country are:

(i) Design specifications of vehicles do not have to be changed to meet country specific regulations.

(ii) Common specifications of vehicle parts would reduce the cost of development/production, and retail price of vehicles. It will also make approval procedures easier, expand the scope of the market and provide the consumers with a wider range of choice.

(iii) It would aid to the forces of competition among manufacturers, leading to increased supply of vehicles with better performance and economy of scales.

(iv) It will enhance our access to a set of benchmark regulations to measure safety and environmental performance of vehicles, domestically manufactured/imported and also facilitate export of motor vehicles.

Users of National Highways

1007. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government proposes to implement a scheme to escort users of National Highways for their safety;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Law and order is a State subject.

Hoardings alongwith National Highways

1008. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a large number of hoardings/ display boards have been erected by advertisers alongwith national highways in Punjab causing various types of problems;

(b) if so, whether Government have laid down any specific policy in this regard; and

(c) if not, the details thereof.

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. As per the extant policy of the Ministry, advertisement are not allowed on National Highways within the Right of Way. However, some relaxation can be allowed in public interest for informatory advertisement at bus stops, hospitals, name of towns etc. Privately sponsored retro reflective traffic signs could also be allowed provided that the [illegible] or logo of the firm. There is an Indian Road congress code No. IRC:67-1972 regarding policy on roadside advertisement. The NH (Land & Traffic) Act 2002 also provides for removal of unauthorized encroachments, which will include removal of hoardings from the Right of Way.

National Highways in Punjab

1030. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of national highways in Punjab where the construction work/repairs are going on at present;

(b) the status of work in each case; and

(c) [illegible] is being done?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The construction work/repairs are going on at present on [illegible] NH-1, NH-10, NH-15, NH-20, NH-21, NH-64, NH-70, NH-71 and [illegible] in the State of Punjab and the status of these works is given in Statement (see below).

(c) The Punjab Public Works Department of Punjab and National Highways Authority of India are the executing agencies for development of National Highways.